on the recommendation of the Commission of Agriculture Costs and Prices to freeze it at Rs. 550 a quintal;

(b) whether States have submitted their views on this issue;

(c) whether for the third year in succession, CACP has recommended a freeze to the MSP of paddy at Rs. 550 and Rs. 580 a quintal for the common and fine grades respectively;

(d) if so, whether Government have received views of the State Governments; and

(e) by when, a final decision in this regard is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) As in the previous years, the Government of India have obtained the views of State Governments on the Report of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) on Price Policy for kharif crops, including paddy, of 2004-05 season.

(c) to (e) For the 2003-04 season MSP was fixed at Rs. 550 per quintal for paddy common and at Rs. 580 per quintal for paddy Grade 'A' compared with Rs. 530 and Rs. 560 respectively for 2002-03 season. In view of severe drought, Government announced a one time Drought Relief Price of Rs. 20 per quintal over and above the MSP for paddy for 2002-03. The views obtained from State Governments are taken into account in the process of MSP fixation for 2004-05, which is now at a very advanced stage.

Task Force on application of bio-technology in agriculture

1046. SHRI R. P. GOENKA:
SHRI MOOLCHAND MEENA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 80 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 9th July, 2004 and state:

(a) whether Government have accepted all the recommendation of the Task Force on application of bio-technology in agriculture; and

(b) if so, the steps taken to implement them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Inter-ministerial consultations are on at present in respect of the recommendations of the Task Force on application of bio-technology in agriculture.

Technology Mission

1047. SHRI RISHANG KEISHING: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the total amount of fund for Technology Mission already earmarked;

(b) the States where Technology Mission is operational;

(c) the allocation of fund under it, state-wise; and

(d) the Technology Mission being a very important and necessary scheme for the backward North-East States whether Government plan for intensive and extensive implementation of the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) During IX plan, an amount of Rs. 229.38 crores has been earmarked for implementation of Centrally Sponsored Scheme on 'Technology Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture in North Eastern States including Sikkim. Subsequently, during the X plan (2003-04), the scheme was extended to other three contiguous hilly States namely Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttaranchal with a total allocation of Rs. 845 crores, of which Rs. 585 crores for North-Eastern States including Sikkim and Rs. 100 crores for Jammu & Kashmir, Rs. 80 crores for Himachal Pradesh and Rs. 80 crores for Uttaranchal.

(b) Presently, the "Technology Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture in North Eastern States Sikkim, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttaranchal" is being operational in following 11 States:

1. Arunachal Pradesh
2. Assam
3. Manipur
4. Meghalaya
5. Mizoram
6. Nagaland
7. Sikkim
8. Tripura
9. Jammu & Kashmir
10. Himachal Pradesh
11. Uttaranchal